

PRICE 1/-

PSYCHIC SCIENCE

The Journal of
The International Institute for Psychic Investigation

VOL. XXII. No. 3

OCTOBER, 1943

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Published Quarterly by the I.I.P.I., Walton House, Walton Street, S.W.3,
from whom it can be purchased, or from J. M. Watkins, 21 Cecil Court, W.C.
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Single copy 1/-. Post paid 1/3. Yearly Subscription 5/- post paid.

U.S.A. Subscription \$1.25 Post Free.

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OF THE
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PSYCHIC INVESTIGATION

EDITOR - MR. B. ABDY COLLINS, C.I.E.

*Responsibility for the contents of any article appearing in these Transactions rests entirely
with the contributor and not with the Institute.*

VOL. XXII

OCTOBER, 1943

No. 3

EDITORIAL

Some of our readers may think we are devoting too much of the little space allowed us by the Controller of Paper, to discussions about the human brain and mind. To them, we would say first of all that an editor in war-time does not get so much choice of articles dealing with psychical research, of which not much is going on now. If our readers will send us interesting articles on other sides of the subject, we shall be only too glad to publish them.

* * *

Apart from this, the relation of mind to brain is the most vital of all issues, if scepticism is to be broken down. Because they believe that research and experiment has established that man's mind is localised in his brain and his brain is his mind, the physiologists as a body with very few exceptions refuse even to consider other kinds of evidence. It is their findings in the last century and since that really determine the attitude of the other men of science. Professor Bozzano saw this when he said that if survival was ever to be established to the satisfaction of the scientific world, it would be not by direct evidence of life after death, but by proof of the truth of animism, that is, that man has a soul independent of his body.

It is around this question that the greatest battles of philosophy have been fought. Arguments of all kinds have been adduced on both sides from the early Greek philosophers

down to the present day. During the nineteenth century aided by the researches of the physiologists, the materialists gained the upper hand. Recently, as the physicists wavered, the vitalists who see in life something that science cannot explain have gained a fresh bearing. Dr. William McDougall, the well-known psychologist, gave as a second title to his great book *Body and Mind* "a History and Defense of Animism," while Dr. Hans Driesch, Professor of Philosophy at Leipsig, a man of world-wide reputation, gloried in the name of vitalist.

* * *

So far, however, the physiologists are unconvinced. Dr. Charles Richet, honoured throughout the scientific world for his prowess in his own field, than whom no one was more convinced of the reality of psychic phenomena, never publicly at any rate could bring himself to admit the possibility of survival, so fixed were his ideas about the dependence of the human mind on the material brain. Thus it is that the findings of a great brain surgeon like Dr. Dandy on the localisation of faculties in the different parts of the cerebrum assume such a great importance. As we pointed out in a recent issue, his is not the only evidence that upsets the apparent facts established by the study of mental diseases, the effects of old age and injury to the brain. If the doctors and professors of biology could be persuaded to consider the question once again an open one, science might well alter its present attitude towards psychical research.

* * *

As many readers will be unable to look up the references we gave in April, we quote two out of several from *Life, Now and Forever*, by A. J. Wills. We have been unable to look up the originals owing to war conditions.

On September 14th, 1939, Prof. Byron Stookey, brain surgeon of the Neurological Institute, N.Y. City, reported to the International Cancer Congress that studies of persons in whom one of the two frontal lobes . . . had been completely removed indicate actual improvements in personality. They are able to make quicker decisions than when the whole brain was functioning.

The American Psychiatric Association, Chicago, in a report dated May 20th, 1939, says, "Loss of frontal lobes of the brain does not affect general intelligence, but diminishes ability to handle problems and plans."

Reports of this type strike at the roots of the reigning theories of physiology.

* * *

We are publishing an article by Miss Vera Staff, in which she describes experiences with her mother as medium, which make her think that she is overshadowed and influenced by Robert Browning. We also reproduce four of the short poems she has sent us, two of them with the permission of the Editor of *Poetry To-day*, in which they first saw light. Along side of these we reprint one short poem by Robert Browning, "Life in a love." It is a typical short lyric with which Miss Staff's poems may be compared.

After a careful search through Browning's published work, we cannot find anything more similar. The contrast is marked enough. Most of Browning's work is more involved and the metre more rugged. Certainly, without knowing of the circumstances we should never have dreamt of assigning Miss Staff's work to Browning's influence in the normal way. Nor, we are bound to say, have Miss Staff's poems the stamp of genius such as mark Robert Browning's, though these do not appeal to us in the same way as most other poetry which general opinion ranks as great. Miss Staff herself makes no great claims for her poetry, but it does have a certain charm.

* * *

Reviews of two very interesting, and in their way remarkable, books will be found later on. Space forbids adequate discussion of either *The Immortal Master*, by Alfred Dodd, or *Faces of the Living Dead*, by Paul Miller. The former contains records of some striking sittings with leading mediums, some of them by proxy: the latter some drawings which, if they had been produced under test conditions, would have provided strong evidence of clairvoyance.

* * *

PLATFORM MEDIUMSHIP

By B. ABDY COLLINS

Most persons who write and talk about spiritualism in slighting terms appear to think that communication with the departed can only be effected in private sittings held in pitch darkness or at any rate subdued light. I suppose I must have had the same idea myself. At any rate I never imagined that mediums could claim to see spirits and give messages to friends and relatives in public. I shall never forget how astounded I was when I attended a demonstration by Mrs. Helen Hughes in Caxton Hall, Westminster, at which Vice-Admiral Armstrong presided. There, in a huge hall crowded almost to capacity, not only on the floor, but in the galleries on either side and brilliantly lighted in every part, Mrs. Hughes clearly seen from all sides on a raised platform, with complete confidence described the spirit forms which she appeared to see close to her or standing by one of the audience and gave messages and proof of identity with surnames, addresses and many other details.

In point of fact the public meeting in full light is one of the main features of modern spiritualism. Many who cannot afford or shrink from private sittings attend these demonstrations regularly in the hope some day of being one of the lucky ones to receive a message. The sceptics believe that they are gullible fools and that confederates are planted among the audiences. While I would not deny that an occasional case of this kind may occur, anyone with experience of this type of mediumship knows that the great majority of messages received cannot be explained in this way. Mediums travel all over the country giving demonstrations every Sunday and often on week days besides in small halls and "churches" where every member of the audience is known to everyone else. Yet the medium perhaps on a first visit and known to no one often gives satisfactory descriptions and messages full of detail.

First-class mediumship of this type is not common. Descriptions are often not recognised, a string of common Christian names is given, of which only one or perhaps none

are acknowledged and the messages are vague or unsatisfactory. Grandmothers and great aunts seem keener to communicate than those nearer and dearer. Sometimes the person singled out refuses any recognition at all. Mediumship of this kind can be very exasperating and even the best mediums have their bad patches. But everyone who perseveres will be rewarded from time to time by brilliant successes and it is with these that I am concerned now.

Platform clairvoyance was a relatively late development, in this country at any rate. It seems to have begun in America and not to have crossed the Atlantic till the late 'seventies. John Slater who is said to have been one of the earliest exponents in America was not born till 1861, and visited England about 1886. John William Fletcher, who was nine years older, visited England for the first time in 1877 three or four years after he became a professional medium. Miss Florence Marryat in her book *There is no Death* describes his methods as though they were something new. His first lecture was at the Steinway Hall. She says "We were seated in the body of the hall, which was full. It was Mr. Fletcher's custom, after his lecture was concluded, to describe such visions as were presented to him, and he only asked in return that if people or places were recognised, those who recognised them would be brave enough to say so, for the sake of the audience and himself." She then gives a description and a message given to her which she says she took down at the time, striking in its detail and truth to her (though no names and only two letters "P" and "F" were given), but as she points out to anyone else most unconvincing.

In fact, it is a typical example of public clairvoyance as we know it now. Mr. Oaten tells me that from the time of his first association with the spiritualist movement in 1892, he has been acquainted with these demonstrations, and his father mentioned to him that he attended one in 1888. He also says that Mr. Frank Hepworth who is still on the platform has been giving public clairvoyance since 1882 and informs him that it was quite common in those days. Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, who was one of the leading lights in the spiritualist world in those days, often expressed herself to Mr. Oaten as strongly against demonstrations at public

meetings as she considered that conditions were likely to lead to bad clairvoyance rather than good. Nevertheless (about 1878-80), she advised Tom Tyrrel, a noted physical medium, to give it up and devote himself to public platform clairvoyance.

So much for the history of the subject, which suffices to show that it has been known for 60 or 70 years and is something quite different from the trance or inspirational address which is even older and has never attained quite the same popularity in this country. The methods of the mediums vary infinitely, just as the methods of those who give private sittings. Some rely on controls, others work without them. Some merely give descriptions and say such and such letters are displayed or built up. Others are mainly clair-audient and repeat detailed messages as they hear them. Some rarely give a name, though otherwise going into some detail. Christian names are more usual than surnames, but some mediums are noted for surnames and full addresses.

All this is really by way of preface to the main question which will interest readers of PSYCHIC SCIENCE. Is there any real evidence that platform mediums can give messages and proofs of identity from deceased persons? Up till recently psychical research had ignored this type of phenomenon, but in the winter of 1938-39 what is described as a "Preliminary Investigation of the Platform Clairvoyante Mrs. Helen Hughes" was undertaken and the results published in the Progs. of the S.P.R. (Part 158, Vol. XLV), for March, 1939. Two occasions were selected, a public demonstration at Caxton Hall on October 24th, 1938, and a private meeting at the London Spiritualist Alliance on December 1st of the same year. I am particularly interested in this investigation as I presided at the latter meeting, which on the face of it appeared a brilliant success, Mrs. Hughes being in her best form. The report was prepared by Mr. C. V. C. Herbert, the Society's Research Officer, who conducted the investigation. He describes the proceedings and says that the general impression obtained by a member of the audience is that by far the largest proportion of the messages are more or less successes. "There can be no question," he says, "that the vast majority of the messages given at these performances are more or

less correct." To what is this due? Does she get her information normally or supernormally? One thing is clear—"the giving away by the sitter of vital information in response to 'fishing' on the part of the medium cannot be operative to any appreciable extent," since "the recipients of messages hardly speak at all." Therefore, if she gets her information normally, she must get it before the meeting.

One obvious way would be during private sittings, of which she gives many and any messages which she gives to persons who have had sittings with her or even those whose relatives and friends had had sittings would have to be discounted at least to some extent. This is shown to be necessary by a record of a private sitting which Mrs. Goldney had with Mrs. Hughes, published in the same proceedings, about which more later. Accordingly those members of the society who assisted in the investigation by mingling with the audience so as to get into touch with those who received messages were asked to find out if possible (1) if they had had previous sittings with Mrs. Hughes, (2) if they had ever before attended public meetings, and (3) if their friends or relations were known to Mrs. Hughes or had had private sittings.

At Caxton Hall, 18 messages were given and contact was made with 10 of the recipients only. Out of these only three had no previous connection with her and two of them received information which mixed up with incorrect facts was correct beyond chance and provides "a *prima facie* case for supernormal cognition." At the L.S.A. meeting, shorthand notes were taken. The audience was of course, much smaller, but the room was crowded and I suppose there were from 80 to 100 persons present. Nineteen messages were given and 14 recipients left their names and addresses, but only eight replied to subsequent inquiries. Three only had had previous sittings, leaving five for examination. It seems a pity that the inquiry was pursued with so little energy. With a little trouble further material might have been made available. Four of the five cases are positive, though wrong information is intermingled. The verdict was that "at least one message . . . provides a *prima facie* case for supernormal cognition." Possibly this is the one in which Mrs. Hughes said that "Annie, Mrs. Villma or Gilma, Katey Smith, Mrs. Smith,

Daisy, Mr. and Mrs. French" were present. Mrs. Smith was the recipient's mother and Annie, Katey Smith and Daisy are her deceased sisters. She knows no one called Villma or Gilma, but had known a Dr. French. French had been mentioned as being a doctor or a dentist.

It was added that shorthand notes were to be taken at two demonstrations to be held in February, but no further report has been published. "The ideal arrangement would be to have a special meeting at which the entire audience was made up of people who had had no previous contact with Mrs. Hughes."

When I heard that these experiments were being made I wrote to the S.P.R., of which I am a member, pointing out that the choice of a meeting held by Mrs. Hughes in London, was the worst possible. It would certainly be attended by a number of her "fans" to whom she would inevitably be attracted. I suggested that the best way would be to select a visit by a competent medium to a small provincial town to which she had never been before. I myself, for instance have presided at a meeting held at Woodbridge, Suffolk at which Miss Jacqueline gave a demonstration. She had never been there before, although there were two or three persons present who had attended meetings at Lowestoft some 50 miles away, where she is well known. The demonstration was astonishingly successful. The information was given in great detail without any mistakes. Some of the facts were unknown to any one present, but were subsequently found to be quite correct. No notes were taken, though I scribbled a few notes immediately afterwards on the fly-leaf of my A.A. Road Book which I have before me as I write. The notes consist of little more than names with one date. One case I can reconstruct. It was that of Alfred Prike, who claimed to be a printer. Miss Jacqueline who is clairaudient first gave the name as Price. Then corrected herself. No one recognised him until she said he had worked for George Booth and was secretary of the local football club. He was then acclaimed from all over the small hall. She then added that he had committed suicide, but was now forgiven. This and other details were all said to be correct. Other names I have recorded

are Cornelius Newson, Walter Baldwin, Walter Brookes, Whistock, a surveyor and one Peachey.

Whistock was described as standing up smiling and twiddling with his watch chain. He was well-known to several present, who all recognised this peculiarity. Walter Brookes was the coroner for East Suffolk. He "said" that he had made himself very unpopular for a time by something he had said at an inquest connected with a big flying accident in the last war, but that later on people realised he was right. It appears that this was the inquest held on the bodies of the Germans who lost their lives when a Zeppelin was brought down in 1917, at Theberton, near my old home in Suffolk. In his preliminary address to the jury Walter Brookes had said that they should realise that these men had only been doing their duty. This caused great indignation at the time, Brookes was called a "pro-German," and it was not for some years that he regained his popularity.

How could Miss Jacqueline have obtained all this information by normal means? She might have read the local newspaper, *The East Anglian*, from time to time in the past, and stored up facts in her subconscious memory. She might have looked up the files of *The East Anglian* in London or Ipswich, and obtained some of it, but not all. Again, as she motored down from London with a friend, she might have arrived early and made some inquiries; but in a small town like Woodbridge with about 5,000 inhabitants, this would have been difficult without attracting attention, and in any case much of the information could not have been acquired by this means. Knowing Miss Jacqueline as I do and having the highest opinion of her character, I feel certain that she did neither; but I feel bound to mention these possibilities. She gave no private sittings, and in fact, only arrived just in time for the meeting.

Encouraged by this experience I arranged another demonstration to be held in Aldeburgh, at the end of September 1939. Miss Jacqueline had never been in the town and there was no spiritualist society. I felt this was a great opportunity and invited the S.P.R. to co-operate. Mr. Herbert wrote regretting his inability to take advantage of the offer for lack of funds, viz., the cost of his own ticket *plus* that of a

reporter. However, I determined to carry it through myself, though conscious that the S.P.R. would never accept any evidence not recorded by their own officers or a member of the Council. Unfortunately, the meeting never took place, though posters advertising it were prepared and all other arrangements made. War was declared: Miss Jacqueline joined some nursing service and cried off. Some day yet, I hope to carry through an experiment of this type.

Great care is necessary in arranging the conditions as Mrs. K. M. Goldney shows in a report printed in the same volume of the S.P.R. Progs. On May 15th, 1936, she had a private sitting with Mrs. Hughes at which she took notes in shorthand. She had the experience not uncommon with Mrs. Hughes, whose private sittings are sometimes complete flops (I have had one myself), of being given a string of names (28) of which only three were known and even so their relationship was wrongly given. At the end she falsely assented to Bessie White as a relation and then to Alec White. On February 10th, 1938, seventeen months later, Mrs. Goldney attended a packed meeting at the L.S.A. and sat at the back of the room with her friend, Mrs. R. In the course of the meeting Mrs. Hughes pointed to Mrs. R. who held up her hand, and said that Bessie White wished to speak to her. Mrs. R. said she knew nobody of that name. Mrs. Hughes, "that's funny, Bessie White—are you sure you don't know her? No: wait. It is not for you, but for the lady sitting next to you." Mrs. Goldney said, "I understand that name." Mrs. Hughes, "Bessie White—and Alec—Alec White. Do you know him too." Mrs. G., "Yes, I understood that also."

Mr. Goldney sums up the case very fairly. She had herself forgotten all details of the sitting which the name Bessie White brought to her memory. Mrs. Hughes must have given some 1,000 sittings since with many thousands of names. Conscious recollection of the two names is, Mrs. Goldney considers "far beyond any normal feat of memory" and is an example of the striking possibilities of trance memory. Certainly, I agree that this shows that in experiments with platform clairvoyants it is necessary to eliminate all cases in which there is any connection between the recipient and the clairvoyant, however remote. It proves, too, as I main-

tained at the time, that the selection of Mrs. Hughes' demonstrations in London for test purposes was bad. I hope some day that an experiment may be made under the conditions which I advised. I would select a competent clairvoyant, choose a small town which he has never visited before and, if possible, even keep him in ignorance of the place where the demonstration is to be held. On the other hand, the audience should be sympathetic and some at least, should have understanding of the subject. In such surroundings a worthwhile experiment could be made. Poor or negative results would not be conclusive, since all mediums have their good and bad days, but a little perseverance should clear the matter up. Unfortunately, it will mean a little money—perhaps £5—and whence will this large sum come?

Since I wrote the above three days ago, I have had an experience which has some bearing on the matter. Less than two years ago I have come to live at Bedford. Owing to the war and my work which takes me everyday to London; hardly anybody there knows me, and I have taken no part in local affairs. During the last two or three months I have started occasionally to attend the public meetings of a small spiritualist association which itself has only a few months ago begun work as an off-shoot of the old society in the town. I am known by name to three or four members, but none of them so far as I know take much interest in the subject matter of this journal and up till a day or two ago I doubt if any of them had heard of "Psychic Science" or knew of my connection with it. Usually I go every other Sunday in the evening and have never been during the week. A few days ago I made up my mind without notice to attend a mid-week meeting at which it had been announced that Mr. Joseph Benjamin, the well-known Jewish medium would appear.

The meetings take place in two small rooms which have been joined together and I sat against the wall of the room furthest from the medium, half hidden by the buttress between the two rooms, with my wife on the outside next to the gangway. I could only catch an occasional glimpse of the medium as he sat there some nine or ten yards away. I found afterwards that he wore glasses with thick lenses and

he claimed and appeared to be very short-sighted. As I have noted before, I am not a good psychic subject and during the many public demonstrations I have attended only once before have I ever attracted the attention of a medium and then with rather inconclusive results. To my astonishment, therefore, my wife and I were the first to be singled out. The medium described an elderly gentleman who he said was Dr. Young, standing in the gangway by my wife. She said she knew no one of that name. "Oh, he is not for you, I see," the medium said "It is for the gentleman by your side." I said also that I knew no one of that name. "There is someone called McKenzie too. Both of them are influencing you and helping you in your writing. You write, don't you? Something connected with spiritualism or rather psychical research." I said "Yes: I did." "Well," he continued, "if you persevere and don't get discouraged, I sense that you will become the editor of a psychic journal." I said nothing. Then he asked, "Do you know William Collins?" This was the name of an uncle of mine: so I said "Yes," then he added "Elizabeth Collins also comes: do you know her?" This was the name of my grandmother whom I knew well and I then remembered that my grandfather who died long before I was born was named William too. The medium then said that Dr. Young was a friend of my grandparents and so was interested in me.

McKenzie might of course, be Hewat McKenzie who as founder of the British College and "Psychic Science" might well be interested in my work. The medium then said that David Gow was also influencing me and he got the name of George Lethem. David Gow was, of course, Editor of *Light* for many years and was succeeded by Mr. Lethem who is still alive and keenly interested in my work. Mr. Benjamin has never, so he says, been to Bedford, and I have never seen him or had anything to do with him. I have merely read of his exploits and seen his photograph in *Psychic News*. I went up and spoke to him afterwards and told him who I was. I watched his reactions keenly, but he was, I am sure, quite ignorant of my identity. I feel therefore, that this experience is evidence of supernormal knowledge.

Some of his other work appeared also very striking. He

singled out a young girl with bright auburn hair sitting half-way down the "hall," between the two buttresses. His first remark was "You have been in a surgery lately." This she denied. In no way perturbed he said he would prove to her that she was wrong. "The lady next to you is a doctor's wife, I think." This proved to be correct: also that they had come together and were friends. He added that she often went to the doctor's house and had recently been in his surgery. This was wrong. She is the lady's daughter but her father is in the R.A.M.C. and is absent on service. His next remark was "You have a mole on the right side of your body." This she admitted to be correct amid loud laughter.

He then left the pair, but later returned to their neighbourhood saying there was someone there who worked in a canteen which members of the American flying forces attended. The doctor's wife said this description applied to her. He then said that an airman named Keith wished to give her a message. She said she could think of no one of that name. "Wait a minute" the medium said, "Here is Duncan, too, who wishes you to give a message to his wife, Beryl." The lady said she knew whom he meant. "Duncan wishes you to tell Beryl that he is still alive and near her." He added that Keith's other name was Craig and he was a friend of Duncan's, as she would find on inquiry. He also told this lady that she had been to the London Spiritualist Alliance for a sitting and that she had wished to sit with another medium, but had sat with Mrs. Nash instead, which she said was correct. Much other striking evidence of supernatural power appeared to be given.

A few days later I was able to get into touch with this lady, Mrs. Newland, who is a resident of Bedford. Judge of my disappointment when I found that though neither she nor any of her relations had had any connection with Mr. Benjamin before, she had had a private sitting with him that afternoon before the meeting. He had then given her the most remarkable proofs of the identity of the young soldier Duncan in whom she was interested. Duncan had met his death eighteen months ago in Burma, and when alive had arranged with her a password to prove his identity, should he pass over first. Since his death she had sat with many noted mediums

and had never been given the agreed words, but Mr. Benjamin had given it her correctly. (See page 94.) Keith Craig had not been mentioned and Duncan's wife Beryl, to whom she had written could not identify him, but thought she might do so later. Should she do so, this would be a good example of public clairvoyance in spite of the previous sitting. The statement about the mole on her daughter's side is anyhow, astonishing as Mrs. N. is positive that nothing of the kind was mentioned at the sitting. In any case this incident shows that one can never take apparently striking successes on the platform at their face value without subsequent investigation.

By these and my other experiences I am convinced myself that mediums on public platforms do give clear evidence of knowledge which they could not have obtained by normal means. The next question is, do they obtain it from spirits as many of them claim and I am sure genuinely believe they do? For my own part, a fairly long experience, during which as presiding officer I have often had exceptional opportunities for observation and have exercised my critical faculties as well as I can, has convinced me that in many cases at any rate, this is the true explanation. Apart from fraud, which in most cases certainly does not occur, there seem only two possible explanations, if we set aside the idea of a world pool of memory, which I regard as a sort of phantasy not based on either reason or concrete evidence. If the information is not obtained from spirits, then as a general rule somehow or other it must be got by the sensitive from the person in the hall. Now, as Mrs. Britten maintained, it is difficult to imagine worse conditions for thought reading or making contact with the subconscious of an individual than a large meeting in brilliant light. There is everything to distract the medium and he or she is often faced with scepticism and a non co-operative attitude on the part of the individual. All around are the clashing personalities of the other members of the audience.

However, whether I am right or wrong, I maintain that here is a really valuable field for psychical research. How strange it is that in this country, at any rate for 60 or 70 years, it has been neglected? This is one of the things that make the work of the Society for Psychical Research during the last decades seem to me so narrow and unrealistic. I gave other

instances in my article entitled "A Programme of Psychical Research" in *PSYCHIC SCIENCE* for April, 1941. I hope that after the war the Society will return to its investigation of platform mediumship on the lines I have suggested.

FACES OF THE LIVING DEAD

By Paul Miller. (Psychic Press, 10/6).

This is an account of the mediumship of Frank Leah, the artist medium. It contains a remarkable series of drawings of deceased persons done by Mr. Leah and the photographs of them taken during their life-time for comparison. Unfortunately, the letterpress is not up to the illustrations. It consists mainly of what Mr. Dingwall would call a series of anecdotes. It is only in two or three cases that anything like independent proof of the circumstances under which the drawing was made is given. These it is true are striking, but it is a great pity that the book is arranged in such a way as to give the impression that most of the information is derived from Mr. Leah himself. Here were materials for a record which would have carried conviction to anyone who was capable of being convinced.

Speaking for myself I have had proof of Mr. Leah's powers under conditions which are completely satisfactory. One of the most striking features of his mediumship is his vivid clairvoyance and the manner in which he takes on the feelings and experiences of the deceased before his passing. I had never seen him and he did not know who I was till I met him at the house of a friend and he gave a sitting to a lady who had come with me. No sooner had he sat down than he cried out "There is a terrible smell of gas in this room. I am choking. I must open the window," which he did in spite of a bitter winter wind. Then he described very accurately her brother who had ended his own life by putting his head in a gas oven and in three or four minutes drew a most striking pen-and-ink sketch of him. A friend of mine with whom he stayed the night had a similar experience. So long as Mr. Leah was in the house he suffered all the symptoms of the last stages of diabetes of which my friend's wife's father had died and drew the most wonderful likeness of the old man. I knew him in India and was astonished when I saw the drawing.

These experiences convince me that Mr. Leah has the powers which are claimed for him, and I recommend the book as a unique record of its kind, but a great opportunity has been missed.—B.A.C.

RECEIPT OF AN AGREED MESSAGE

It is not uncommon for two persons to agree that if one dies before the other, he will send a certain message or password through a medium in order to prove he is still alive. The receipt of such a message is a rare phenomenon and very few such cases are on record.

It is our good fortune to have had first hand information of such a case and to have been able to check its authenticity so far as is possible. The recipient is Mrs. J. Newland of 15 Bushmead Avenue, Bedford, with whom I am acquainted. Mrs. Newland is the wife of a doctor in the R.A.M.C. and while in India she made a pact with an officer in the Burma Frontier Force that if one of them died before the other he or she would try to get through the words "Jumbo Dwip," the name of a place where they and two other persons had been lost and had a most unpleasant adventure. The officer was a sceptic in regard to survival but agreed half in jest to carry out this experiment.

This was before the outbreak of war with Japan.

On March 8th, 1941, he was posted as missing in Burma. Ever since Mrs. Newland has been trying through different mediums to get definite information regarding him and in the event of his death to obtain the agreed message. She has sat with a number of mediums, including Mrs. Nash, but has been unable to learn anything about him. On Thursday August 12th, she had a sitting with Mr. Joseph Benjamin at Bedford, where he had come to give a public demonstration of clairvoyance. Neither she nor any of her relatives or friends had had any previous contact with him. The medium appeared to go into a light trance and at once described an old ayah who had served the family for years in India, of whose death she had heard only a month previously. Nothing was further from her thoughts than to get into contact with her. He did not give her name but spoke in broken English as she did and displayed all the knowledge about the family which she would have.

He then described a young man in uniform who gave the name of Duncan and said she had two articles with her which

my wife
Becky Duncan
will soon
be back
TUMBO
INDIA
D

belonged to him. She then produced a letter which she had had from him and a photograph. She gave the letter to the medium and kept the photograph face downwards on her lap. He then controlled the medium and at first was confused, but later grew calmer. Eventually she asked him if he could give the agreed code words. At first he said he could not remember, and then he slowly brought each syllable out. Suddenly the medium seized the photograph from Mrs. Newland's lap and wrote the agreed words and a message to his wife: "My wife Beryl, tell her I love her."

On the opposite page is an exact reproduction of the medium's writing. This seems to us the best case of the receipt of an agreed message which we have come across. Certainly it ranks with "Julia! Do right and be happy—Benja," quoted by F. H. Myers in *Human Personality* (S.P.R. Progs., vol. viii, pp. 248-51). Mrs. Newland is an experienced sitter of a well balanced type and she assures me that she was careful to give away nothing to the medium. In the case of Benja, the message was written down and sealed and the communication is open to the usual objection that the medium may have read the message clairvoyantly. Further, we have only the verbal testimony of "Julia" (without other witnesses) that the message was received. In this case Mrs. Newland alone knew of the message and it was actually written down by the medium and seen directly afterwards by other witnesses, who confirm Mrs. Newland's statement. She herself has certified the above account to be correct.

The only "normal" explanation is that the medium read Mrs. Newland's mind. No one can deny that this is a possible explanation. All one can say is that other well known mediums failed to do so. Cases of this kind are part of the varied evidence of all kinds which goes to support the hypothesis of survival.

B. A. C.



COMMUNICATION WITH ROBERT BROWNING

By VERA STAFF

A question often asked is: when great souls return to earth and communicate with those still living here, why do not they say something of importance, to add to our store of knowledge and to show that their intellect or artistic power has increased, or that they have progressed since they were on earth? Robert Browning has recently given an answer to this question when speaking through a medium (Mrs. Staff). He said that those who wish to communicate through someone in the physical body must find a medium of equal intellectual powers or artistic ability if they are to achieve such a result. What they can say is limited by the faculties of their medium; the number of great men and women of to-day who believe in the facts of spiritualism and have developed their own spiritual powers is still very few.

Robert Browning has not found another poet of his own stature to inspire, but he has one conscious pupil with some poetic feeling, a belief in psychic phenomena, living with a relative who is a trance medium and an instrument through whom the poet can speak when he wishes to instruct or encourage his pupil. With these conditions obtaining, a new kind of experiment is being worked out: the conscious direction of a minor poet living on earth by a major poet now on another plane.

When the trance medium's development was almost completed, about four years ago, Browning first made himself known to her clairvoyantly, when she and I were having a sitting together in our home. The medium, my mother, knew little about the personal appearance of the poet and neither of us had made a special study of his work. He was seen dressed in old-fashioned clothes—a dark green coat with buff collar and cuffs—sitting in a high-backed chair, at a desk, leaning his head on his hand. He was looking at me, smiling, and saying:

"I will lend her my brain, though she will not understand how it is done."

When the sitting was over I showed my mother as many portrait heads of English poets as I could find on our bookshelves (I had a feeling that the speaker was a poet), and from these Robert Browning was picked out. He afterwards confirmed his identity when he spoke through my mother in trance, and at other times through two mediums at the International Institute for Psychic Investigation (Mrs. Mary Methven and Mrs. Lilian Bailey), as well as to a group of spiritualists meeting at a friend's flat in Kensington, when I was present.

Browning found it a difficult matter to control my mother at first. He shook her head and shoulders about, nothing more occurred, and soon afterwards the controlling personality evidently retired. Another took its place, there was a gentle laugh, and a woman's voice said :

"Robert is so clumsy."

This was Mrs. Browning, who controlled the medium quite easily. Browning himself soon learned to speak through my mother and has continued to talk with me since that time, through her mediumship, at almost regular weekly intervals. He gives me advice and instructions as to how he wishes me to work, and encourages or gives a word of criticism about what I have written. The poems themselves are not written down during the sittings with my mother, but are often done a few hours or days afterwards. During a sitting an idea may come to me like a flash without any reference to it being made in the communication. Sometimes Mr. Browning says to me "There is something ready for you in the storecupboard."

He understands very well that the busy life of present times is a great handicap, and has more than once contrasted it with the leisure which people could enjoy in the days when he lived in earth. He seems to use the method of communication through my mother as a means of giving help and encouragement to his pupil, and without that encouragement it is quite likely that I should have given up trying to find an opportunity of writing down in verse the thoughts that come to me. Mr. Browning says that he enjoyed his work on earth and that he likes to continue it through his pupil. He has others who respond to his inspiration unconsciously, but at present I appear to be the only one working

through conscious direction. The experiment, if it can be called one, seems to have been planned a long while ago, and the circumstances of the pupil's life, with impulses and opportunities for reading and travel abroad, to have been arranged with this end in view. Mr. Browning has referred to places of great beauty, places where stirring events took place, or scenes with romantic associations which lend themselves to poetic treatment and has said that he was with me when I visited Italy and Greece. At one of our sittings he asked: "Do you feel yourself becoming more sensitive to colour?" I replied that I did. "That is right," said Mr. Browning, "That is a part of your education which we have undertaken. You will find yourself becoming increasingly sensitive, with such an impulse to translate your impressions into words that you will be compelled to write them down."

His advice about obtaining the best conditions for work might interest other writers of verse:

"Read the poems which you like best, the ones you admire for their rhythm; it will cause the rhythm to flow in your brain and will make it easier for me to send you something." He believes in the helpfulness of music and of beautiful natural surroundings. On one occasion he said, "Oh, that sordid mess of work! Wait until I can take you away from it and dump you in the country, under a tree!" At another sitting his first words were "Well, what's the hitch? Why haven't you finished it?" I had begun a poem and put it away in my desk, incomplete. No one else knew of this. Once when Mr. Browning had made some remarks rather bluntly, Mrs. Browning followed him. She said (through my mother): "You know my husband sometimes speaks roughly, but that is only his manner. He was most delicate in thought." Another time he told me he thought I should write a poem about a bird. I thought of Shelley's skylark and Keats' nightingale, and my unexpressed feeling was "I'm bothered if I will write about a bird! Of all the subjects to avoid" The poem was written, however. It is called "Honey," and is about bees, but in the fourth verse occurred, quite unexpectedly, scarlet parrots. This looks rather like a practical joke.

A short time ago I was asked whether Mr. Browning had ever expressed regret at writing "Mr. Sludge the Medium."

I had never discussed "Mr. Sludge" with him, but I put the question to him at our next sitting and received the following reply:

"It (the poem 'Mr. Sludge the Medium') was done on account of my wife. Her feelings had been hurt. There had been fraud, there had been insincerity. I was indignant. You know what respect I had for my wife. I could not bear that anyone should delude her. When I was on earth my character was strong, determined, hasty. It was written in a moment of haste and anger. If it has been misunderstood, then I am sorry and I do regret having written it."

It may be remembered that G. K. Chesterton, in his book on Robert Browning in the *English Men of Letters* series maintains that the poet's scorn and indignation was for the fraudulent type of medium and should not be read as a general condemnation of spiritualism or psychic phenomena.

Why, it may be asked, does Robert Browning undertake to guide, advise and inspire a pupil living on earth? If, as the pupil who receives his communications and writes the inspired verse, I may be allowed to express my personal convictions, I would say: I believe that we are only just beginning to realise the extent to which we are indebted to the help of spiritual guardians in our earth lives; and that service to us is part of the life of discarnate beings on other planes. Mr. Browning himself has said no more than "I enjoyed my work on earth, and I like to continue it through my pupil. On another occasion he said "The poems are to have a purpose, as all poetry should have." That purpose is, I think, best described in the poems themselves which seek to convey comfort or invite to the appreciation of beauty, particularly the beauty of spiritual truth. In them and in the communications given to his pupil in prose I feel that the poet continues to teach and to give of himself, according to the measure of the pupil's capacity to receive and to transmit his thought.

THE UNCHOSEN

You say, of what avail record our pain?
I sing the transmutation of the soul,
That from intolerable pangs of grief
A greater joy and beauty shall be born.

Only by death comes life. The Alchemist
In the divine crucible pours suffering.
Whatever soul is burnt in agony,
Worn like the stone with drippings numberless,
Till all the shackles and appendages,
The clinging tendrils and the clutching arms
Of this so dear and so death-dealing world
Are dropped and shrivelled from it: while a sweet
Savour of incense rises in the air,
Received into the ocean of the sky.
Then shall the Torturer be powerless;
Your lovely treasures blackened in the fire
Were but his instruments. They too are burnt.
Their strong allurements cannot rack you now.
From the bright day look down and see on earth
A little charred and slowly smouldering heap,
All that is left, O soul, of suffering.
Fear it no more.

VERA STAFF.

(*Poetry of To-day.*)

TO DIG AS ADAM . . .

To dig as Adam without hope
Through one short life;
As Adam's wife
With tears repressed
And memories of Eden's joy
To grope
The way to death
Is not enough;

To live branded as Cain,
Die young as Abel,
Break the heart in vain
As Moses, never setting foot
In the Promised Land,
Is not enough;

But having known the anguish of all these
To turn
And in the darkness
Without thought or wonder yearn
For that far home of the soul
Where lights angelical
Sing "Holy" at the feet of the Beloved;
And then unceasingly to strive
Until the glowing spark, alive
In every creature, flies
Toward the eternal skies—
This, and not sacrifice,
This will suffice.

VERA STAFF.

THE OLD CROWN INN, BRACKLEY, AUGUST, 1940

An old historical inn, says the notice.
Literary people sometimes stayed here
In days when coach horses clattered on the cobblestones
To the rousing notes of "Tally Ho!" clear.

The Iron Duke, Madam, slept in this bedroom.
Tradition has it that limp King John
Passed through this doorway to rest his puzzled head
Before the Great Charter was agreed upon.

What is Wellington to a dreamer,
Or King John? Of little worth
Hasty motorists with fashionable ladies
Or the huntsman's evening rowdy mirth.

What would I give to see the wraith of a poet
With tight buff trousers and dark green coat
Walking upstairs in the evening twilight,
A smile on his lips and a song in his throat?

Mr. Browning, I think you sometimes stayed here
Between Northampton and Wimpole Street,
Partook of refreshment and wrote a few stanzas
Till the horses were changed and the coachman replete.

Now a convoy of army lorries is roaring
Up the main street in a cataract of noise.
Overhead engines of bombers are zooming,
Deadly playthings of modern boys.

How can I close my ears to this clamour
And hear your voice with its deep, strong tone.
Oh, read, Mr. Browning, just a few verses
Before Miss Barrett claims her own!

I confess as we sit either side of this table
I could envy Miss Barrett, she had so much . . .
But as I grieve for the waste of world chaos
I feel on my head an ethereal touch.

"It is time to wake," says Mr. Browning,
"Time and space are illusions of earth.
I will teach again," says the poet and prophet,
"The growth of the soul and the new world's birth."

VERA STAFF.

THE CHRYSALIS

Do not fear age, dear soul, disease, or death,
Those twitching bogies of the sleepless dark,
Nor grieve because the early joy and strength
Of the young body are for ever lost.
Gone too is wrath, and no more passionate storms
Can in a moment tear the lovely woods.
You shall no more desire that which turns sour
In the mouth, and dusty in the hands.
But in the wrinkled chrysalis of skin
Grows a fair youth in starry mantle wrapped,
One who shall soar and never sink to earth
Like lead, shall laugh and ride the winds with song,
Shall never stretch his arms in vain to beauty
Or find them empty of the vision clasped.
Nor shall he seek and yearn for the divine
To lose the blessing in a blur of words.
O, feed the shining creature when he cries
And do not count the pain of giving birth!

VERA STAFF (*Poetry of To-day.*)

LIFE IN A LOVE

Escape me ?

Never—

Beloved .

While I am I, and you are you,

So long as the world contains us both,

Me the loving and you the loth,

While the one eludes, must the other pursue.

My life is a fault at least, I fear—

It seems too much like a fate, indeed !

Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed—

But what if I fail of my purpose here ?

It is but to keep the nerves at strain,

To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,

And, baffled, get up to begin again—

So the chase takes up one's life, that's all.

While, look but once from your farthest bound,

At me so deep in the dust and dark,

No sooner the old hope drops to the ground

Than a new one, straight to the self same mark,

I shape me—

Ever

Removed !

ROBERT BROWNING.



FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON DR. DANDY'S REPORT

By EUGENE R. CORSON, B.S., M.D.

A study of the history of science shows us that the greater steps have been taken by those who have invented delicate instruments of precision. Many thousands of lesser men have thus been able to use these instruments and add their mites to the growing knowledge. The story of the X-Ray tube is a good example. Again, this X-Ray tube has led to the radio tube, and the story has passed into the fairy tale.

Dr. Dandy's Report could only have come with the great advance of surgery and with the brain surgery which has enabled the surgeon to cut out large portions of the brain to help us localize the areas of mentality and consciousness, never before known or even imagined.

From the beginning of this history the greatest errors have come from taking of anything for granted where the exact knowledge is lacking, and yet in most cases this error seems impossible to avoid; man naturally seeks free and easy thinking. Spinoza had a letter seal on which was one Latin word, *Caute*, which means cautiously, a fitting motto for a great philosopher, as well as for the thinking man.

For centuries men of science have taken for granted that the hemispheres of the brain are the one and only seat of the intellectual faculties, without one bit of accurate knowledge on the subject. And even a greater error has come from taking for granted that an organ of the mind, composed of cellular tissue, no matter how much elaborated, can produce thought as easily as the liver and stomach can produce bile or gastric juice. Even when Professor William James showed the folly of such thinking they took no notice and continued the same old thinking.

In Dr. Dandy's case, however, he limited himself to giving the bare results following his radical operations without any speculation or theories. This is the force and beauty of his master-stroke.

In passing, I would briefly mention the work of I. P. Pavlov, the distinguished Russian physiologist who spent several years

on experimenting on the brains of dogs. He died in 1936, and there has come to us two large volumes now put in English to summarize the Russian Scientist's work. Only a brave and patient reader could wade through these two books. He writes of "conditioned reflexes," whatever that may mean, and the reader has to stumble over the word, hemisphere, which he takes for granted as the one and only known seat of man's intellectual faculties. He was repeating experimental work done on animals years ago in this country and found useless. These two volumes bring out in strong and high relief Dr. Dandy's master stroke which can be read in five minutes.*

Dr. Dandy's Report is the fulfilment of Professor James's Ingersol Lecture: no higher praise can be given it. This special lecture destroyed the so-called productive theory of the brain. It did not matter whether science took any notice of it or not, officially or individually: the silence which followed was more eloquent than words. More wonderful still, all that the lecturer knew and did not mention was crying out from the depths. To lecture on immortality was to play with a word: all science and all philosophy had to start from the unknown. To hug an end-result was to hug a delusion: to overcome a delusion one had to be a master of *finesse*. He did not tell his audience he was sick and tired of the productive theory which had come down from the centuries and was a farce, but that the thinking was too superficial, and was like calling steam the function of the tea-kettle.

Now Dr. Dandy was also a master of *finesse*. He did not tell us that he had found the centre of consciousness, but that when the anterior cerebral artery on the left side was ligated the patient lost consciousness forever: he did not say it was death either in minutes, hours or days. He knew and science knew that the nerve cells in the areas supplied by this artery were the same on both sides, right and left.

Thus we come to a very crucial point. The microscopic study of the nerve cells in the hemisphere does not show any difference on the two sides despite the great difference in

* I would state my great admiration for Russian science in all its features and phases. It has just happened that I could not be in sympathy with Pavlov's work: others may see it from a different angle.

function shown by Dr. Dandy's Report. If we turn to the spinal cord the microscopic study shows us that there are two kind of cells, motor and sensory, and that the motor cells especially are larger and quite different. Infantile paralysis shows us these motor cells, when destroyed, can never be replaced. We now seem to be on firm ground and we can draw the following conclusions: *One*: All physiological functions are dependent on the cell. *Two*: All psychic functions are independent of the cell. *Three*: It is questionable if the physical body can ever act separately and alone, even with physiological functions, without orders from higher up. Psychical Research alone can answer this question.

As pointed out by Professor James the transmission theory has to postulate a "sphere of being." The composition of this "sphere of being" in my opinion is not only unknown, but may never be known. To think of thought as produced by cells is unthinkable: it is much better to think of thought or psychic function as coming from a mind tissue or psychic tissue so to speak. The use of the phrase the sphere of being is only new in the words: St. Paul called it "the Spiritual Body": Paracelsus called it "the Astral Body" and modern research calls it "the Etheric Body." Professor James was also keen enough to see that he could not specifically use the word soul or the spiritual body, so he invented a new phrase thus giving us a new and beautiful phrase in our language.

We must all regret that Professor James did not live to read Dr. Dandy's Report. No one was so fitted to tell us what it all means. Again, the pity that this report came too late for the great men in the early days of the S.P.R.: they have all gone before. Only a Psychical Researcher could have written the Ingersol Lecture, and only a Psychical Researcher could have off-hand seen the full significance of Dr. Dandy's Report. Only one interested outside the narrow limits of conservative science could be interested.

Section Three of the report, where ligation of the left anterior cerebral artery is followed by complete and forever lost consciousness, is the most difficult to harmonize or reconcile with the rest of the report. Dr. Dandy holds to his decision to give the bare results of his operations, and wisely so. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to conceive of a centre of conscious-

ness, for we have no material texture associated with it as we have with sight or hearing for example. We have the same difficulty with the centre of thought for the same reason.

Consciousness is the one reality, without boundaries and without limitations, without beginnings, endless, timeless. No mortal texture can hold it, no immortal texture can make it, and spirit alone has the key. No wonder we are confused.

In 1920, a book appeared entitled the *Unseen Guest* by Darby and Joan. The anonymity has never been disclosed. This is a book of great merit. The guide who calls himself "Stephen" has given us his philosophy; he has also given us his definition of matter never before attempted. "Matter is the form-attribute of consciousness." This is startling but I can believe it, thought I may have to take some time to steady myself. From this definition we may better understand why consciousness requires matter to be aware of itself and even in a spiritual world requires the astral semblance of matter.

To think is the accompaniment of consciousness whether the thought is direct and expressed or intuitional or inspired. Again this definition may emphasize Descartes "Cogito: Ergo sum," and show its greater significance. Perhaps again it may help us to understand better the result following the ligation of the left anterior cerebral artery. To cut off the blood supply to any part of the body without the hope of a collateral circulation means the death of that part. The vascular system of the brain is elaborate and ample, but this system has always seemed to me to show nature's care to keep the circulation equalized without looking to a collateral help. That area is dead and responds to no stimulus.

Before we go any further we must state emphatically where we stand. The brain myth is dead and dead forever, and the reaction must be world-wide and beyond present reckoning. Psychological Research will be the gainer, and so-called academic psychology can take notice. The word psychology belongs exclusively to psychical research, as its Greek etymology tells us.

Now for the first time we are able to draw a sharp line between physiology and psychology. On the basis of what has gone before I would now write briefly on the great psychic

gift of memory because it has come in a way within my own experience, and also because it has not often been emphasized in our literature. When I was eight years old my Mother took me with her to see "Blind Tom." "Blind Tom" was a coal-black negro, I think from the West Indies, heavily pitted by the small-pox, whose sightless eyes in their white-scarred sockets greatly increased his ugliness. His manager told us that he was a great musician and could reproduce any piece of music, complicated or simple immediately after hearing it. When the music commenced, "Blind Tom" became very alive; he would begin quite violent contortions and grimaces as though trying to hold every note of the music. To my youthful eyes he seemed quite terrifying. When the music stopped he would quietly take his seat at the piano and repeat the piece note for note as far as we could see. Of course, where the music was simple we could more easily be assured that the reproduction was real. The whole performance was a very remarkable one. It could be compared with a not very uncommon performance where the psychic could repeat a piece of poetry or prose word for word after hearing it once. The influence of the contortions and grimaces in holding the memory was an interesting feature.

Many years ago a gifted reader read a little poem of Wordsworth and I was much impressed. In later years, awake in the night, I thought of this poem, and suddenly I found I could repeat the greater part of it word for word: my Recording Angel had made me a present of the poem.

Our literature shows a dearth of examples of the Recording Angel. We have had repeated to us often the case of a servant in the employ of a Rabbi whom she had heard reading aloud Hebrew, a language she of course did not know. Years afterwards she had been able to repeat these Hebrew words. In more recent literature we should find better examples than this. In an issue of PSYCHIC SCIENCE for January, 1941, Mrs. Mona Rolfe has given us an autobiographical sketch of her life in which she has with full detail given us the most beautiful example of the Recording Angel. The scene was laid in the court-room where a criminal was being tried for his life for a horrible murder; the scene was

most dramatic and tragic: I would not mar the beauty of her story by a partial quotation.

A study of the works of genius brings us, as from the depths, many beautiful examples as though fresh from the lavish hand of the Recording Angel. Lord Macaulay on the deck of a ship with nothing to read tried to see how much of the "Paradise Lost" he could repeat: he found he could repeat word for word the first four books of this great song. John Milton had only to see or hear once a word or name in a language that he was acquainted with never to lose it. The study of genius is the study of the miracle of the human spirit.

It required no penetration to see that Mr. Dandy's Report had a direct bearing on Physical Research.

Section Three is full of difficulties but they arise from the difficulties of consciousness itself, the one great reality which we cannot think of as "made." To get anywhere we must start with the conviction that neither consciousness nor mentality can directly come from any cellular tissue. We must also remember that Dr. Dandy's Report was hid away in the archives of a scientific society and was practically out of sight of Psychical Research for thirteen years.

We know that a severe blow on the head will cause unconsciousness, but all we can say positively is that consciousness was present and when we begin to speak of a "centre" we begin to get beyond our depths and become confused. We may get some aid if we turn to a case in Mr. Muldoon's book, *The Projection of the Astral Body*. A man returning from work on the top of a wagon high with hay falls off on his head and he suddenly becomes aware that his physical body is alongside of him. He soon returned to his body. This would seem to show that his Astral Body had been affected by the blow.

With Dr. Dandy's Report and with the great mass of evidence which comes from Psychical Research we must know definitely that physiological function and psychical function are absolutely different and come from different sources, though often active together and probably much more often than we think, and that man is not an acephalous monster, but a truly psychic and divine person.

In the Second Section of Dr. Dandy's Report he wrote:

“Furthermore, by the excision in other cases of the left occipital lobe and of the lower third of the temporal lobe we can be sure that none of these regions are responsible for intelligence. The intellect, therefore, is concerned with the remaining portion of the left cerebral hemisphere, and is doubtless closely related to the speech mechanism.” It is important that we carefully take notice of this statement for we have corroborative testimony coming from disease. Following a “stroke” when the left hemisphere is involved we get a more or less complete paralysis of the right side of the body, and with it a more or less loss of the memory of words. The patient who sees a chair, for example, knows it to be a chair but he has forgotten the name of it. We can thus infer that language has to do with this part of the left hemisphere.

When we grow old we begin to notice that we forget certain words, in the beginning proper names and later other words long familiar to us. Sometimes a name is slow to come to us and does not come directly with the thought of it. Sometimes we bring it with a little manœuvring by the association of ideas or by making the mind a *tubula rasa*, that “wise passiveness” that Wordsworth has given us. Sometimes it may be an hour before it comes to us while thinking or speaking of something else. Sometimes we may lose the word again and have to repeat the manœuvre; again we must write it down to be sure of it. This must show the transmission from one source to another. Now all this time with these lost words we are also conscious that we know the words, but just cannot say them and this means that they are somewhere tucked away safe and sound, and this again shows us that there is a “somewhere else” close at hand. All this shows the effect of age upon our physical body and mental agility. In our youth we jump so quickly from one brain to the other that we are not conscious of it. In the third dimension we may mentally measure the tenth of a second, while in the fourth dimension we may, perhaps, mentally measure the thousandth of a second. I may say this on the authority of the mathematical prodigy. Thus age may bring a loss of mental agility but the mind may have gained in other ways.

Where we can trace a collaboration of the psychical with the physiological we always see that the psychical must take the initiative and is the starter. We see this, I think, in the study of sleep.

When I was an undergraduate in the University I wrote a little paper in the University magazine. In my immature mind I thought sleep was an entirely physiological function: we got tired and we naturally fell asleep. I did, however, have the idea that the physical brain must show some reaction and I hunted a long time to try and find this reaction in the literature: but I found nothing. In my desperation I thought of the great Swedish seer, Swedenborg, and there I found what I wanted. Swedenborg described what he clairvoyantly saw on the surface of the brain while awake and while asleep. While awake the brain had a pink colour with the convolutions prominent, and while asleep there was less pink colour and less prominence of the convolutions. While I have only half told my story, the fact that I have called in for evidence a great psychic witness showed that I was still ahead of the game.

I would now write reverently on another point which has been in my mind for many years, and its truth has grown with these years, and since for two years Dr. Dandy's Report has been much in my mind, this may be the proper place to bring it up.

In the Church creed the words are, "Conceived by the Holy Ghost." Now I can believe this but I must make a little, an only little change in the deeper meaning of the word, Ghost. Lord Tennyson has used the happy phrase, "The ghost in man, the ghost that once was man." If we will employ Tennyson's use of the word, "ghost" for the "Spiritual Body" of St. Paul everything will be serene, and we can go on our way. Again, this use throws light on a great biological problem which is also the great real miracle, greater than all the miracles of the New Testament, for it is the most human in its power and glory. It makes the soul of man the great labourer in the vineyard. It helps to make us realize that both body and soul are divine along with every living thing. With this concept we can see how body and soul work together, and without any intermission to one noble

end. One, the initiative and starter who gives us the plan, the other, the builder who completes it, though under the all-seeing eye of the master.

I have written this second paper on the subject of Dr. Dandy's Report because I cannot rid myself of its great importance and I want many others to get into the same fix. It is hard to think of anything but the war, but the human spirit always comes to the rescue.



NOTES BY THE WAY

One of the most important of the Institute's activities in these restricted war years, has been Mrs. Harrison's work in training mediums for appearance on public platforms as well as for private sittings. Four of her students, having reached a point where practice in public is essential to their further progress, demonstrated to an audience of experienced and sympathetic sitters at the Institute on September 30th.

Mrs. Kemp, Mr. Alldridge, Mrs. Millar and Mr. Gould, all gave messages which were recognised, and among these were some really outstanding bits of evidence.

A general discussion on the training and technique of mediumship followed, in which some very useful questions were asked. These were answered, either by Mrs. Harrison, or by the student-mediums themselves. Some of these questions concerned the important subject of the sitter's share and responsibility in all kinds of psychic work, an aspect which is far too often overlooked. This interchange of views and experiences was found helpful to the audience as well as to the students, and it was agreed to hold another of these informal meetings before the end of this session.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE IMMORTAL MASTER

By Alfred Dodd. (Rider, 10/6).

Mr. Dodd claims to give proof, largely by communications received through mediums, that Francis Bacon was the real author of Shakespeare's plays. A somewhat amusing side to the matter is that some of the clearest messages were received through Mrs. Hester Dowden, daughter of Prof. Dowden, the great authority on Shakespeare. She is a cultivated woman and thoroughly convinced that her father was right in considering this idea to be ridiculous. She was considerably disgusted on realising the gist of the messages recorded by her hand. PSYCHIC SCIENCE cannot concern itself with the Baconian controversy but it is worth noting that "Francis Bacon" in communicating asserts that the original MSS. of the plays are not lost and will one day be found. The records of sittings with Mrs. Helen Hughes, Mrs. Stella Hughes, Mrs. Helen Spiers, George Daisley, Mrs. Abbott and Mrs. Annie Brittain (most of them taken by proxy), are all of interest, but I find special value in an account of a sitting with Mrs. Helen Duncan. For the most part it was unsatisfactory.

The figures "stood between the curtains and all looked suspiciously like the figure of Mrs. Duncan draped in white material." This is a good description of a poor sitting with Mrs. Duncan, such as sceptics and strangers usually seem to get. But at the end a slim young girl whom Mr. Dodd had known and loved 35 years before stepped right out of the cabinet, swept round the circle, spoke to him two or three times, but when he held out his arms to her "melted into air, into thin air." There is another account of an even more remarkable sitting with the same medium when Mr. Dodd's grandfather walked out across the room to him and gripped him by the hand.—B.A.C.

MY PSYCHIC QUEST

By E. W. Ramsay. (Rider, 5/-).

There seems no end to books written by sceptics who become convinced of the truth of survival by their own investigation. This by an educated man, an architect by profession, is better than most. It does not contain the usual account of marvellous sittings. His change of attitude began with a strange dream and it was continued largely by reading—a process which much resembles my own and so attracts my sympathy. To his surprise he found that spiritualists were not the nit-wits that they are usually represented to be. They proved to be "very sane, level-headed people, with a buoyancy of spirit, due to their beliefs, not possessed by many outside their ranks." Cranks are a small minority. He sums up very well the advantages of a general acceptance of the spiritualist position. It is a short book—96 pages small—and well worth reading.—B.A.C.

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